26 March 1956

MEMORANDUM FOR: Colonel Terhune

SUBJECT: R-W Responsibility in the ARS Program

1. I note with some concern Dr. Ramo's letter of March 16, 1956 to General Schriever in which he enclosed a rough draft of a letter, for General Schriever's signature, which, if bought, would create what I believe to be an unworkable arrangement for prosecuting the WS 117L program.

2. Specifically, Dr. Ramo proposed that a portion of the overall program, involving design, fabrication and testing of an orbiting vehicle, be handled by R-W in the same manner as the WS 107A and WS 315A programs. I believe that such a piecemeal-parceling out of the total job would be a serious, if not fatal error.

3. I believe that if we are given authority to proceed with the development of a complete Reconnaissance System, such as described in SR 5, our first and most important step should be to designate a prime contractor to assume systems responsibility. I do not believe that R-W is qualified, either in numbers of available people, or in background, to handle this job.

4. To charge R-W with the task of developing and launching a vehicle independent of the overall program would be to accept the possibility (I think probability) that the vehicle would have to be completely re-designed and re-developed later under the direction of the weapons system contractor in order that it be compatible with the reconnaissance equipment it must carry.

5. I further sense in the suggestion that R-W handle the vehicle an entre leading to a pitch for complete systems management as soon as R-W can show a capability to handle it.

6. Until R-W is definitely removed as a competition to Lockheed, Martin and RCA for systems management, I am withholding circulation of all ARS reports to R-W, except those required by them to answer specific technical questions I have asked them. If this is contrary to your wishes, I would appreciate a directive in writing to the contrary.

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MEMO FOR: Col. Terhune, subject: R-W Responsibility in ABS Program

7. To assist in firming the policy with regard to R-W participation, I am enclosing the following reply to Dr. Rabe for General Schriever's signature.

SIGNED

R. C. TRUAX
Commander, USN
Assistant Deputy
WS 117L